



**Report to Washington's National Park Fund
Staff and Board of Directors**

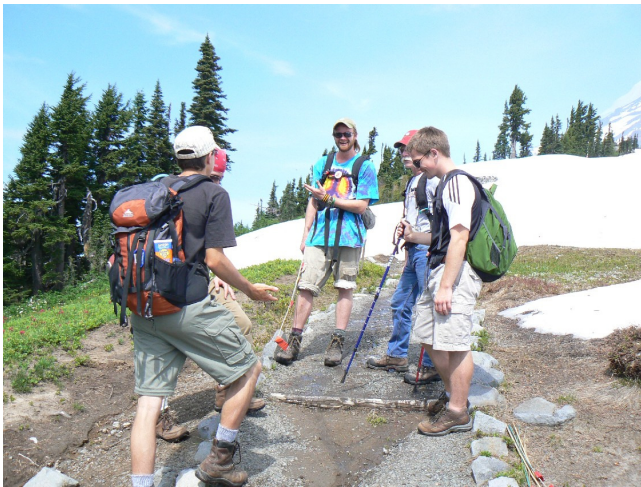
**By SCA- the Student Conservation Association's
Mount Rainier Recovery Initiative**

August 9, 2007

SCA—the Student Conservation Association—continues to implement the Mount Rainier Recovery Initiative by mobilizing a force of volunteers completing flood recovery and other priority restoration projects in Mount Rainier National Park. To date, SCA has recruited and led 376 volunteers and facilitated 5746.5 person-hours of volunteer service within the park. This second report to Washington's National Park Fund summarizes SCA's accomplishments under the grant since the July 20, 2007 report through August 5.

Paradise Meadow Protection

Clear skies, warmer weather, and progressive snowmelt have combined to significantly increase visitation to Paradise, making the goals of visitor education and trail improvement ever more urgent. On a typical weekend, Paradise receives 8,000 visitors. To accommodate the crowds, SCA's Mount Rainier Recovery Corps focuses on trail restoration during the weekdays, when it is easier to set up a work space with fewer interruptions and visitor safety concerns. On weekends, when the area is taken over by crowds, the work centers on visitor education and pathway delineation. Flags and ropes marking the edge of the trails continually become misplaced and need to be returned to their proper location. Visitors straying beyond the pathways present an opportunity for education and outreach about human impacts on these fragile ecosystems. SCA provides a shorter version of the Meadow Rover training to its weekend volunteers to enable them to do this work.



Mount Rainier Recovery Corps members speak with Paradise hikers about their habitat protection efforts.



A volunteer removes gravel from the meadows at Paradise.

Accomplishments:

- completed 130 hours of meadow roving to date
- provided educational contact with 290 visitors to date
- recruited, trained and led 128 volunteers from the public to date
- completed 1,176 person-hours of trail work to date
- accomplished essential drainage work and cleared debris from much of the Dead Horse Creek, Skyline, Pebble Creek, High Lakes Trail, and Lakes Trail West:
 - raked 8 miles
 - cleared 198 drains
 - cleared 675 feet of side ditching

- repaired 240 feet of tread
- reset 10 timber check steps
- reset 3 rock check steps
- removed 200 feet of gravel from meadows
- moved 30 obstacle rocks

What's ahead:

SCA's upcoming work schedule includes several more days of protection and preservation at Paradise.

Wonderland Trail Re-route

As stated in the previous report, reroutes of the Wonderland Trail in numerous washed-out areas will be necessary before hikers will be able to complete the legendary circuit around the mountain again. The previous report contained a detailed description of the reroute located near the Cougar Rock campground. SCA continues to work on that reroute and has made significant progress toward the goal of completion by the end of the field season this year. Two SCA high school crews have been working steadily on the Cougar Rock section of reroute.

SCA recently began working on a second reroute, addressing damage to the section of the Wonderland Trail in the Stevens Canyon area of the park, between Paradise and the Ohanapecosh Visitor Center. New trail needs to be constructed where a landslide caused by flooding obliterated the path.

SCA is taking on the completion of these two substantial reroutes with gusto. Building new trail in the northwest is incredibly difficult work, involving continual obstacles and challenges. Some or all of a crew might spend an entire afternoon troubleshooting one large root or moving a boulder. These projects require creativity, innovation, hard work, and tenacity.



SCA members from the Conservation Leadership Corps program have worked extensively on the Cougar Rock reroute.



Reroutes like this one at Stevens Canyon are tough jobs. Starting from scratch, volunteers must work every root, rock, and slope into a smooth and even trail.

Accomplishments since last report:

- removed 66 stumps
- transported 70 gallons of fill
- cleared 2,300 feet of brush to create trail corridor
- “We also moved two really huge rocks,” adds Field Coordinator Willie Ehrenclou
- established 915 feet of new trail
- provided 680 person-hours of service
- recruited and led 8 public volunteers

What’s ahead:

There is still much work to be done on the Wonderland reroutes. Since the Cougar Rock area is receiving the attention of numerous community organizations in addition to SCA, SCA will focus much of its public volunteer recruitment in the coming weeks toward the Stevens Canyon reroute.

Comet Falls Trail

After the last report, SCA spent one day in the field at this site. During that day, the crew continued its efforts to improve drainage on the trail.

Accomplishments since last report:

- provided 24 person-hours of service
- installed 3 timber check steps and one drain log

What’s ahead:

SCA will spend several more days on the Comet Falls Trail before the season is over.

Multi-Day, Backcountry Projects

Since the last report SCA has led three multi-day, backcountry projects open to the public—a second project farther up the Huckleberry Creek Trail and two projects in the historic Indian Henry Cabin area in the southwest corner of the park. At Indian Henry Cabin, SCA crews completed restoration and maintenance projects on the Wonderland, Kautz Creek, and Mirror Lakes Trails. SCA was honored to host former Washington’s National Park Fund Board of Trustees member David Barbrack and his 17-year-old son, Taylor, for the second trip to this area. David was generous to give us a few moments of his time for an interview after his hike out of the backcountry and before his drive home. The interview is included as a separate video file with this report.



David and Taylor Barbrack work together.



SCA Mount Rainier Recovery Corps members prepare a meal for the crew at Huckleberry Creek.

Accomplishments:

- 5 additional days of service at Huckleberry Creek:
 - cleared 20 feet of trail
 - raked 2.5 miles of trail
 - installed 1 rock waterbar
 - built 1 french drain
 - built 1 rock culvert
- First 5 days Indian Henry Cabin:
 - cleared brush from 6,000 feet of trail
 - raked 7,500 feet of trail
 - cleared 104 drains
 - 154 person-hours of service
- Second 5 days at Indian Henry Cabin:
 - cleared 8 campsites at Devil's Dream
 - 1 four-foot bridge built
 - installed 5 stepping stones
 - made 6 visitor contacts
 - brushed and raked 1.3 miles of trail
 - repaired 30 feet of tread
 - dug 360 feet of side ditches
 - replaced 2 check steps and 2 drain logs
 - cleaned 89 drains

Upcoming backcountry projects:

- August 8-12 at Ipsut Pass (northwest corner)
- August 15-19; September 1-5 at Three Lakes Cabin/Laughingwater Creek (southeast corner)
- September 1-5 at Golden Lakes (northwest corner)

Conclusion

As a direct result of Washington's National Park Fund's support of SCA's Mount Rainier Recovery initiative, conditions at Mount Rainier National Park have significantly improved over the past three weeks. Many trails are safer and more accessible, and significant wildlife habitat is more protected. As SCA member Mike Wagner-Gallucci recently stated in an interview with NPR station KUOW, "The damage I saw [in April] just blew my mind. It was unlike anything I've ever seen before. It's amazing just in the three months that I've been here, it's amazing how fast the park is restoring and rebuilding. It's pretty nice being able to see that firsthand." (Mike's interview and the rest of the KUOW report on the subject of volunteerism at Mount Rainier are included with this report.) SCA would like to reiterate its appreciation and gratitude to Washington's National Park Fund for its contribution to SCA's programs and the benefit it provides to the park.